CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.865
8 February 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 February 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60420 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 865th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Conference, to extend a very cordial welcome to the new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments in the Conference, namely, Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya and Ambassador Sverre Bergh Johansen of Norway, and to assure them of our cooperation and support in their new assignments.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Kenya and Switzerland.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I want, however to confirm that, as was announced at the presidential consultations yesterday afternoon and as I hope has been communicated to you all, I intend to convene immediately after this plenary meeting an informal open-ended consultation on the programme of work of the Conference.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya. Ambassador Mohamed, you have the floor.

Ms. MOHAMED (Kenya): Mr. President, I am addressing the Conference for the first time. Accordingly, before I move to the subject of my statement, I would like to say how grateful my delegation is to you for your efforts in steering the Conference on Disarmament in the search for a consensus work programme and I should like to assure you of our support and best wishes.

Mr. President, I have taken the floor to inform distinguished colleagues and delegations that, on 23 January 2001, Kenya deposited, with the United Nations Secretary-General in New York, its instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Kenya has therefore become a State party to the Convention.

We have taken this step out of our concern over weaponry which continues to have a devastating effect on many countries, especially in the developing world. It is particularly worrisome that, much as these weapons are deployed in conflicts by combatants, their main victims continue to be innocent civilians, including children.

We therefore consider the Convention to be an appropriate instrument for tackling, in a comprehensive manner, the widespread use of anti-personnel mines. At the United Nations, Kenya has traditionally co-sponsored the resolution on the implementation of the Convention. It is our hope that the Convention will attain universal adherence, as urged by the resolution, and that the human suffering resulting from the use of mines will thus be reduced to a minimum, if not brought to an end.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Mohamed, and welcome again to the Conference. I thank you for your kind words, and I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Faessler.

Mr. FAESSLER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has the privilege of speaking under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to you and assure you of the Swiss delegation's full support to you in your performance of your functions.

It is my honour to address the Conference today on behalf of the French and Swiss delegations on the subject of a seminar on traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons. The seminar, organized jointly by the French and Swiss Governments, will be held on 12 and 13 March this year at the Geneva International Conference Centre. The main aim of the seminar is to hold an informal exchange on the subject of traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons, with an eye to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which will be held in New York in July 2001. On the first day of the seminar, specialists in this area will introduce certain technical issues. These presentations will be followed by an informal discussion, involving representatives from industry and from non-governmental organizations. The second day will be given over to an in-depth discussion between governmental experts on the political, legal and technical implications of an international regime for the traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons.

I would like to draw the attention of representatives here to the fact that the invitation to this Seminar, issued jointly by the French and Swiss Governments, has recently been transmitted to the States taking part in the Conference on Disarmament and to permanent missions in Geneva and New York. A copy of the invitation has been placed this morning in the individual pigeon-holes of delegations attending the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes my list of speakers for today, unless there are other delegations that wish to take the floor.

If not, I should like to invite you now to take a decision on the request of Côte d'Ivoire to participate as observer in the work of the Conference during this session, without having first considered it in an informal plenary. This request is contained in document CD/WP.517, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Côte d'Ivoire to participate in our work, in accordance with our rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our business for today. As I announced earlier, I will convene in 10 minutes time in this conference room an open-ended informal consultation on the programme of work

The next meeting of the plenary will be held a week from today, on Thursday, 15 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.